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VOLUNTEERS FOR THE VC VERSUS VC DRAFTEES

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Frankie

*Differential
performance?
Defector vs. prison?
(same prob.)*

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SUMMARY

During the years after the armistice of 1954, the governments of South Vietnam attempted to pacify the rural population. A combination of carrot -- loans, fertilizer, schools, etc -- and stick -- arrests, executions, threats, etc -- techniques were employed. Although these programs were perhaps misapplied to varying degrees, a study of the consequences of these activities by the government can provide some insights about present U.S. pacification efforts.

This document summarizes the results of a study of one limited aspect of these pacification efforts. Conceptually it can be said that the ultimate failure of pacification is to have one or more villagers make the decision to actively cooperate with (join) the VC. This analysis is then a study of these GVN failures; that is, it is a study of the factors which led persons to voluntarily join the VC. It is, of course, true that only one of the goals of pacification is to prevent insurgent recruitment; but, it does appear to be an important one.

The basic question asked in initiating this analysis was: what pre-VC characteristics differentiate the person

who volunteers for the VC from the one who is eligible to volunteer but does not. That is, what experiences, social characteristics, capabilities, etc. differentiate volunteers from non-volunteers. The goal, of course, was to attempt to define how the pacification system failed for these volunteers.

RAND has interviewed a large number of ex-VC. Each of these subjects was asked whether he volunteered for the VC or not. Those responding affirmatively provided a sample of persons who "volunteered." Abstractly several categories of persons constitute the above mentioned "non-volunteers:" 1) persons joining the GVN forces, 2) persons not joining either side and 3) persons drafted into the VC. Only the third type -- VC "draftees" -- was available to form a sample of non-volunteers.* For this analysis a third group was also present: those who retrospectively indicated a combination of voluntarism and coercion -- "mixed volunteers."

*It is probably true that the three groups not volunteering for the VC are to some degree different. The VC draftee is a fairly varied individual. After 1964 almost all men between the ages of 18 and 35 living in the rural areas controlled by the VC were inducted. Excluded from this set were those persons moving to the cities or joining GVN service.

These three groups were examined to determine how they differed in their pre-VC characteristics. Two approaches were employed.

- 1) An indirect approach was used in which subject descriptions of his life -- which he did not in the interview necessarily associate with the decision to join -- were examined to determine differences between volunteers and draftees. For example the correlation between years of schooling and volunteering - not volunteering was examined.
- 2) A direct approach was employed in which the subject was asked what were the important factors in his decision to join, that is, his retrospective account of the key experiences in his decision.

The original interviews on which this analysis is based were general purpose and quite broad. Thus, the data are not as one would have them if this particular study were in mind. As a consequence the analysis is empirically oriented. That is, within the context of the available descriptors of pre-VC life which ones are associated with volunteering.

An important negative finding is the lack of association between socio-economic descriptors and volunteering. see (2)

- 1) Within this context Buddhists, those professing no religion and ancestor worshipers volunteered with about equal frequency.

(Almost no Catholics and very few Hoa Hao and Cao Dai were in the sample.

- 2) Peasants classified as poor volunteered at roughly the same rate as those categorized as middle class.
- 3) There was no correlation between owning land and volunteer/not-volunteer.

Two variables seemingly indicative of "capability" tended to provide a basis for differentiating volunteers from draftees.

- 4) Those subjects with more education tended to volunteer more often than persons with less education. Education levels typically ran from 0 to 7 years.
- 5) Those subjects which the interviewers rated as of "low" intelligence tended to volunteer much less frequently than persons rated as having average or high intelligence.

Not at all surprisingly, subjects who had had "bad" experiences with the GVN tended to be volunteers.

- 6) Subjects who had relatives killed by the GVN showed an above average frequency of volunteering.
- 7) Subjects mentioning some personal "mistreatment"* tended to be volunteers.

vs. Guine!

*Varying from arrests-extortions to verbal insults.

Two other variables which are loosely termed as indicators of "peer group pressures" provided a significant capability for differentiating volunteers from draftees.

- 8) Persons with relatives in the VC or without relatives in the GVN tended to be volunteers.
- 9) Persons who had ^{before?} perceived that the local villagers predominantly favored the VC tended to be volunteers.

Two indicators of personal frustration also provided some capability for defining persons susceptible to the blandishments of the Viet Cong.

- 10) Persons who stated that life was good versus those who indicated some complaints or life bad, tended to not volunteer.
- 11) The few subjects who indicated that they had had trouble with society tended to not be draftees.

A final parameter of broken homes provided some indication of propensity to volunteer.

- 12) Subjects who had lost one parent tended to volunteer more often than those who had not; subjects who were orphans had an even higher rate of volunteering.

Land reform has been a major question in the GVN and U.S. pacification programs. These data are rather ambiguous with regard to the importance of "land" in joining the VC.

Relatively few of these volunteers indicated promise of land as a reason for joining the VC (only 19%). However in the limited sample of 55 volunteer and 45 draftee interviews which were intensively examined 5 subjects were found who received land from the GVN, all 5 of these were staunch draftees. Land does not appear to have been a major appeal of the Viet Cong; but it cannot be ignored as irrelevant.

No one of these parameters, however, gave a very high predictive capability. That is, although there were more volunteers among persons with family in the VC, such persons still had a significant probability of not volunteering. It seems reasonable to assume that each of the above factors tends to contribute some increment to the "propensity to volunteer." It would be expected that a person with a single characteristic has a higher "propensity" than a person with none; a person with more than one will have a still higher propensity. A multivariate index was formulated based on the six best univariate predictors of volunteering.* This index is the ratio of the number of characteristics positively associated with volunteering to the number of characteristics negatively associated with volunteering. *or, difference?*

in order?

* The six best predictors are: (1) relative killed by GVN, 2) relatives in VC, 3) personal grievance against GVN, 4) years of education, 5) personal life bad, 6) local villagers favor VC.

This composite index gives a markedly better capability for differentiating volunteers from draftees than does any of its component variables, at least at extreme values.

- 1) Subjects who had over 75% of their responses positively associated with volunteering were 81% volunteers.
- 2) Subjects who had all responses negatively associated with volunteering were 74% draftees.
- 3) Subjects who had close to an equal balance between positively and negatively associated responses tended to be about half volunteers and half draftees.

Thus, the multivariate index defines subsets (at either extreme) which tend to be almost unanimously either volunteers or draftees. Those persons in the middle ranges might be considered under cross pressures and subject to going either way. Thus, a person with relatives in the VC and from a pro-VC village, but who had a good personal life and who had not had any difficulties with GVN representatives might be considered a fence sitter. Depending on chance occurrences he might or might not volunteer.

The above analysis did not require that the subject himself tell why he joined. Rather it was effort to define types of persons who on an empirical basis were

susceptible to volunteering. After completing the above statistical analysis a sample of 55 volunteer and 45 draftee interviews were pulled and reread to determine 1) if other factors not in the above code seemed to be important and 2) what was the primary reason (in some cases "trigger") which led to the decision to volunteer. That is, what did the volunteer for the VC, himself, retrospectively associate with his decision to join.

One clarification occurred on rereading the interviews of the draftees. With regard to capability, it would appear that a number of the draftees might be considered as "passivists." They were typically uneducated, poor, unambitious and seemingly would not "volunteer" for anything. The VC inducted many of these subjects in their drive to conscript all able bodied men in 1965.

*Hyp: didn't
want
draft?*

In the subjects' statements of primary reasons for joining a few factors appeared to dominate.

A cluster of factors associated with personal social-economic frustration was mentioned by 32 percent of this subset of volunteers. Loss of jobs, failure in school, inability to support family, hope for a better future in the VC, etc. were the more specific responses representing this cluster.

The next highest (28 percent of the total) frequency of response was a cluster centered about personal* experience of oppression by GVN representatives. These experiences included false arrests,** rape or execution in the family, attempts at extortion, thievery, and in a few cases verbal insults. *leading?*

A third and somewhat less important cluster (11 percent) centered about abstract (as opposed to personal) issues of social justice. Concern with GVN brutality and corruption and statements of the inequity of income distribution in the village represent most of these responses.

A fourth set of volunteers (20 percent) appear to have been "sold" simply by VC recruitment devices. Although it is probably true that these subjects would not have volunteered if there had not been a general aura of the "goodness" of the VC, they said they joined because of the pretty girls, chance for adventure, opportunity to handle a gun, etc. Most of these subjects were very young and immature at the time of joining.

* Including the immediate family in personal.

** These subjects claim they became VC only as a consequence of the arrest.

Six percent attributed their joining to pressure from family or friends and a few miscellaneous reasons were expressed.

all in "third set"

An examination of time trends of reasons for joining among all volunteers indicates little that is particularly surprising. A general decline in "liking the VC political aims" is noted from 1958 to 1965. Nationalism was of declining importance through 1961-62. Since that time (as U.S. involvement increases) there has been a small rise in the frequency of expressing nationalism as a reason -- however, the frequency never approaches that of the war against the French. *Do we know?* Dislike of the GVN shows a marked decline throughout the time. Join for land and belief that the VC will win shows an upswing for a time after the '54 armistice but a decline more recently.

!?

CONCLUSIONS

Several generalizations seem to be of importance.

*Discussion:
synthetic
image*

The Diem program for rooting out the Viet Minh infrastructure seems to have been one primary source of recruits for the VC. Persons themselves falsely accused as VC (VM) or whose families were so accused and those persons concerned about such practices are common among the early volunteers. The interviews are replete with examples of the VC specifically exploiting given incidents and telling the subject how he has been oppressed, how the government is unjust and therefore illegitimate, etc.

General corruption, arrogance and brutality on the part of GVN representatives often made the recipient of such acts a potential VC recruit.*

Lack of opportunity within the GVN system contrasted with VC offers of education and good jobs influenced many persons. This appears to be particularly true among the more capable peasant who had gotten at least a minimum education and who could see the promise of a better life if he could escape the immobility imposed by the GVN system.

Not occurring as frequently as the above types but

* As always, the acts combined with VC exploitation of them are important.

still important were those who were economically excluded. Especially orphans, but inclusive of several very poor were persons who could not hold a job or had inadequate land to support their family. The VC offered these persons an escape which was not possible in the GVN system.

And, of course, adventure and glamour attracted the young.

There are two sides of this picture. These persons are those experiencing some frustration in the system as it existed. So often the VC recruiter was a dedicated person attempting to exploit on a personal contact basis this underlying frustration. He might contact a single individual a half dozen times. On the other side the GVN was impersonal and unconcerned with the problems of an individual.

With the VC usually considered at least as valid an organization as the GVN many of these subjects escaped from the system by the act of joining the VC. It is important to note that, as the author's interpretation is valid, the above noted frustration, malpractices etc. by themselves did not make revolutionaries. But the above experiences in the presence of an organization with a

cite comments showing importance of this

certain degree of legitimacy* and in the presence of ardent,
persistent recruitment did create persons who voluntarily
dissented from the existing order.

*That is, the VC were not considered traitors, rebels
etc., but were thought of as sincere nationalists.

INTRODUCTION

This document reports on a study of the individual pre-VC characteristics which differentiate volunteers for the VC from those persons who were drafted into the VC organization. It is written in the belief that many of the pacification failures of the Diem and subsequent South Vietnamese governments were selective failures. That is, that the programs only failed with regard to some persons. One of the best ways of examining these failures is to examine the experiences of those persons representing the most unpacified segment of society -- those actually volunteering to join the VC.

By examining the factors leading these persons to join the VC it is hoped to provide information about what the U.S. pacification efforts must accomplish if they are to reduce support and recruitment for the VC. Admittedly, however, it must be recognized that some of these parameters will have changed by now. It seems equally true, on the other hand, that U.S. pacification faces some of the problems of the 50's and early 60's.

Thus, the effort in this study was to differentiate the Southern peasant who volunteered for the VC

from the non-volunteer;* and to differentiate these volunteers in terms of their pre-VC background -- experiences, beliefs, socio-economic characteristics.

The general purpose RAND interviews (AG and DT) with ex-VC provide the basic data for this analysis. The interviews were not designed with this purpose specifically in mind and thus the analysis tends to take the form of analyzing what is empirically available as opposed to developing a project based on theoretically important factors.**

A sample of 491 subjects was available. The original raw interview transcripts had been coded into a numerical form and these coded data formed the basic data for manipulation (Ref. 1). Simple statistics were employed primarily contingency tables.

A new questionnaire is being implemented in the field as a consequence of this analysis. In particular an effort will be made to interview some persons in the GVN's RF and PF.

* Available data restricted the non-volunteer sample to VC draftees. No significant samples of persons joining GVN organizations or not joining either side were available. }

** RM-5338-ISA/ARPA (Ref. 1) provides a description of the available materials.

DATA AND METHODS

The RAND Corporation has been interviewing former Viet Cong since the middle of 1964. During this time several series of interviews covering different types of persons and/or different topics have been conducted. Although it was not a primary motivation in any of the research projects several of the series directed some effort toward obtaining descriptions of the subjects' pre-VC life and the conditions under which he joined that organization. A sample of 491 interviews containing all interviews providing significant information on the why and conditions of joining formed the base for this analysis.

These interviews were done under highly varying conditions. Oftentimes in very undesirable circumstances in prisoner of war camps.* The interviews were done by Vietnamese working directly for the RAND Corporation and subsequently transcribed into English. Sampling more often than not consisted of interviewing whoever was available or in case of a choice interviewing the candidate potentially most knowledgeable about the VC.** About

* Often privacy could not be obtained, interruptions occurred or the subject's captors occasionally intruded themselves into the scene.

** Usually defined by rank or length of service.

half the subjects were defectors from the VC and about half were persons captured by the U.S. or GVN.

Thus, it is not possible to say that a representative sample of the VC is available. On the other hand it isn't possible to know how, if at all, unrepresentative the sample or subsets of the sample are. A large number of hard core revolutionaries exist in the sample as do a large number of persons caught up in the circumstances of a war. An effort will be made to keep the reader informed about possible limitations and/or shortcomings of the sample when discussing the findings.

The original interviews were done in a somewhat unstructured manner. Most of the persons interviewed were not well educated and the interviewers were under pressure to cover a wide range of topics in a very limited period of time.* The problem faced in this analysis was how to extract patterns if any from data which are unstructured with regard to content, are direct translations of verbal responses, are sparse in many cases with regard to topics of interest and are of highly varied depth and breadth.

* Subject and transportation availability in the remote rural areas often limited the interview time to a few hours or less.

A two-step approach was chosen. First a content analysis like coding was done on a variety of topics in the original material. Usually this coding involved a coder asking himself if the interviewee answered yes or no with regard to a given question.* For example:

Had the subject ever experienced
personal mistreatment at the hands
of a government representative?
Yes____ No____ Uncodeable____

This coded material provided the basis for a statistical analysis of relationships.**

The second approach involved the author reading a stratified random sample of the interviews.

During the reading a further coding was made and, of course, impressions formed.

EMPIRICAL REASONS FOR JOINING

Obviously some means of defining the "reasons for joining" of these subjects is needed if characteristics are to be associated with reasons. Each of these subjects provided his retrospective reasons for joining.

* Often the items were simply regarded as uncodeable either because they were not asked or if asked were answered ambiguously or not at all (See Ref. 1).

** The coding was multi-purpose being done for this research as well as others. Several coders were involved and intercoder reliability was maintained above the 0.90 level (See Ref. 1 for a description of the coding).

During the coding several reasons for joining including being drafted or coerced were coded. From these items three nominal categories of reasons for joining were defined as follows.

The four coded items used were:

- 1) Join because of general socio-political aims of the VC.
Yes____ No____ Uncodeable____
- 2) Join because of nationalism-reunification theme.
Yes____ No____ Uncodeable____
- 3) Join because of hoped for personal benefit from VC -- education, land, future job.
Yes____ No____ Uncodeable____
- 4) Join because drafted, arrested, or coerced by VC.
Yes____ No____ Uncodeable____

These categories are not mutually exclusive. The definitions for the three categories of joiners are:

Volunteers

- A) A "yes" coded on at least one of items 1) to 3).
and B) The absence of any "no" codes on items 1) to 3).^{*}
and C) A "no" code for item 4).

^{*} A volunteer thus might be coded as follows: 1) Yes, 2) Unk., 3) Unk., 4) No. The requirement is at least one "yes" on 1) to 3) and one and only one "no" and that on 4).

Mixed

- A) At least one "yes" coded on items 1) to 3).
and B) A "yes" coded on item 4).

Draftees

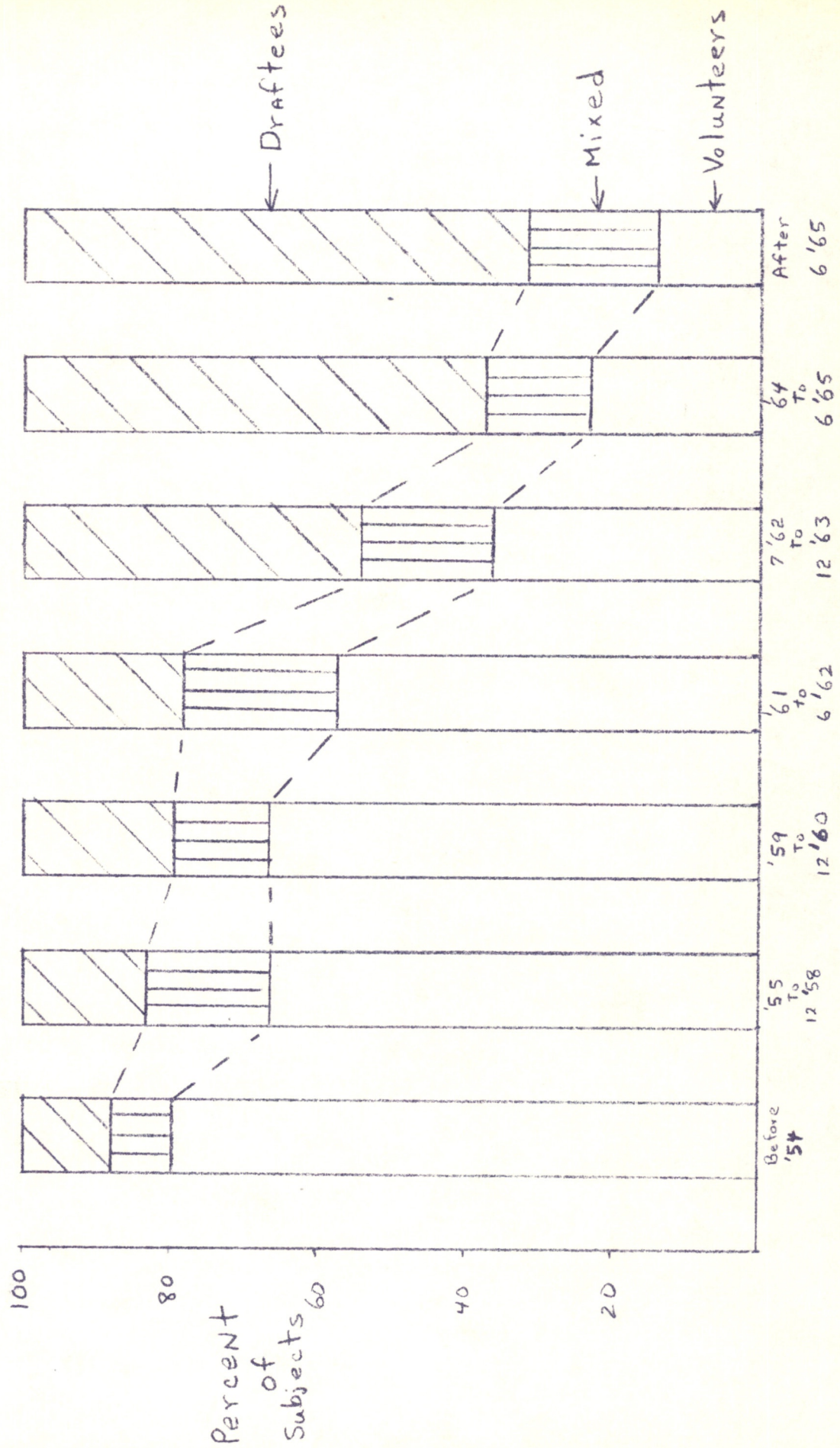
- A) The absence of any "yes" coded on items 1) to 3).
and B) A code of "yes" on item 4).

There were certain pressures which might have induced these subjects to slant their stories about joining. In particular some might feel a need to curry favor with the GVN by telling how they were forced into the VC. As a consequence some effort was made to obtain a validity check on these stated reasons.

It is more or less common opinion that prior to 1963 the VC were primarily a volunteer group and since that time have increasingly been obtaining new recruits through coercive induction. One validity check is to examine the distribution of draftees versus time of joining as in Figure 1.

The pattern of an increasing frequency of draftees over time is as expected. The frequency of draftees prior to '63 seems higher than one would suppose from the "folklore" about the VC.* Interviews for several of these

*This may be indicative of an unwillingness on the part of some to admit volunteering.



Date of Joining VC

Figure 1

early draftees were re-examined and with a few exceptions their stories sound plausible enough.

It would appear that the volunteer category is probably fairly pure. It may be that the draftee group has a few "false" members in it.

Another means of controlling the draftee group so that only "low propensity" people are in it is as follows:

- 1) Since 1963 in almost all of rural Vietnam the young man eligible for the VC has been exposed to VC recruitment efforts.
- 2) He becomes eligible at age 17 or 18.
- 3) Therefore, a person not joining the VC until after the age of 22 or 23 must have had several previous opportunities. Thus, a posteriori it seems reasonable to suppose such individuals are not particularly susceptible to the blandishments.

For some purposes the draftee category will be restricted to persons at least 22 years of age when joining as an additional control on misrepresenting reasons for joining.

Predicting Volunteering

The first step in the analysis was to determine which descriptors of pre-VC life were correlated with volunteering for the VC. To do this contingency tables were constructed comparing the frequency of volunteers, mixed joiners and draftees among those persons exhibiting a given characteristic/experience with the frequency of the same categories for those persons not exhibiting that characteristic (See Table 1). The uncodeable responses are not tabulated and account for the sample size variation in Table 1.

Several interesting relationships are apparent. First, although several variables correlate with volunteering no single characteristic appears to define a subset of persons who are exclusively or close to exclusively volunteers. For example, persons who had relatives killed by the GVN volunteer for the VC far more often than those who had no relatives killed. However, even those with "relatives killed" exhibit only a 37% volunteer rate.

Second, some variables seem to predict volunteering,

others mixed joiners.* For example, the 23 persons indicating that they had some form of trouble with society show a much higher frequency of mixed joiners than those without trouble. However the "trouble" group actually has a lower frequency of volunteers.

Each of these variables except religion and class provides a good capability for at least differentiating volunteers or mixed joiners from draftees. Perhaps somewhat surprising is the very strong relationship between indicators of high capability (education and intelligence) and volunteering. One can think of two explanations for this and both may well be operating.

1) There is, at best, little economic-social mobility in the GVN system for persons without a higher education. The Viet Cong promote on merit and at least in the early days offered a chance for advancement and power on what appeared to be a potentially winning side. Thus it may well have been that many of the more capable peasants saw the VC as the only way to a better future.

2) The volunteers in this sample are only compared with VC draftees. Many young men serve in the GVN armed

* However, in several cases the samples are quite small.

Table 1

Percent

	<u>Volunteers</u>	<u>Mixed</u>	<u>Draftees</u>	<u>Sample Size</u>
Buddhist	26	23	51	168
Ancestor Worship	27	33	40	133
Social Class				
Middle	27	32	41	127
Poor	26	28	46	288
Own Land	26	30	44	150
Education-Years				
≥ 6	38	39	23	44
4 or 5	28	37	35	124
1 to 3	22	26	52	135
= 0	18	22	60	32
Rel. in VC - Yes	26	43	31	67
Rel. in VC - No	22	27	51	51
Rel. killed by GVN - Yes	37	44	19	16
Rel. killed by GVN - No	0	56	44	9
Villagers Favor VC - Yes	32	55	13	64
Villagers Favor VC - No	19	23	58	164
Life Before Join				
Bad	30	51	19	47
Mixed	38	27	35	60
Good	22	27	51	271
Trouble w/Society - Yes	14	69	17	23
Trouble w/Society - No	26	26	48	378
Grievance re GVN - Yes	34	47	19	68
Grievance re GVN - No	23	26	51	336
Subject Intelligence				
High	32	35	33	132
Average	29	31	40	91
Low	11	21	68	80

forces or live in the cities and tend to be beyond the range of the VC draft. The better educated and more intelligent, if they do not wish to serve in the VC, have a greater chance of finding an acceptable life in GVN service or in the city than do the uneducated and dull. Thus to a certain extent the almost universal conscription adopted by the VC after 1964 may have netted a large residue of uneducated "passive" peasants. Thus it may just be that the more capable joins (one side or the other).

The other relationships appear straightforward enough. "Peer ties" with the VC, personal difficulties in life, or bad experiences with the GVN can define persons who are relatively prone to volunteer.

Do additional educated ^{only} go to VC cities RVNAF?

MULTIVARIATE PREDICTION

The univariate predictions provide in some cases a reasonably good capability for defining those who at least partially voluntarily join; but usually a relatively weak capability for defining a high probability for unambiguous volunteering.

Another way of looking at the problem is to consider a cross pressure model using multiple variables. That is, the person who has relatives in the VC, is in a pro-VC village, has lost a job, etc. can be considered to

have many and consistent "personal pressures" making him prone to join the VC. A person with relatives in VC, a good job, in a GVN leaning village is faced with contradictory pressures, and so forth.

The assumption was made that a higher percentage of mixed joiners would be in those groups defined by contradictory pressures while those with consistent personal patterns would strongly tend to be either volunteers or draftees depending on the pattern.

The high frequency of missing values and the use of dichotomous data obviated the possibility of using relatively sophisticated multiple regression models. Rather a discrete index of the consistency of volunteering pressures was defined from the six "best" univariate predictors.*

The index is formed from the ratio of number of responses positively correlated with volunteering to the number of responses negatively correlated with volunteering. Thus a subject with relatives in the VC (+), relatives killed by the GVN (+) and a good life at home (-) would have

*The six variables are: 1) relatives in VC, 2) relatives killed by GVN, 3) grievance re GVN, 4) years of education, 5) pre-VC life and 6) villager attitudes toward VC when joining.

2(+) 's and 1(-) and an index value of $2/1$.*

The values on the index of volunteer propensity were then grouped as shown on the horizontal axis of figure 2. The pattern holds pretty much as expected although there is a lesser tendency for mixed joiners than anticipated.

	<u>Mixed</u>	<u>Not Mixed</u>
Contradictory Pressures	30	171
Consistent Pressures	13	144

The large sample tends to make the difference fairly significant statistically; pragmatically the relationship tends to be so weak as to not be of interest.

However, those subjects with consistent pressures tend very consistently to be a volunteer or a draftee depending on the direction of the pressures.

* It is assumed for this example that the remaining 3 indicators were uncodeable.

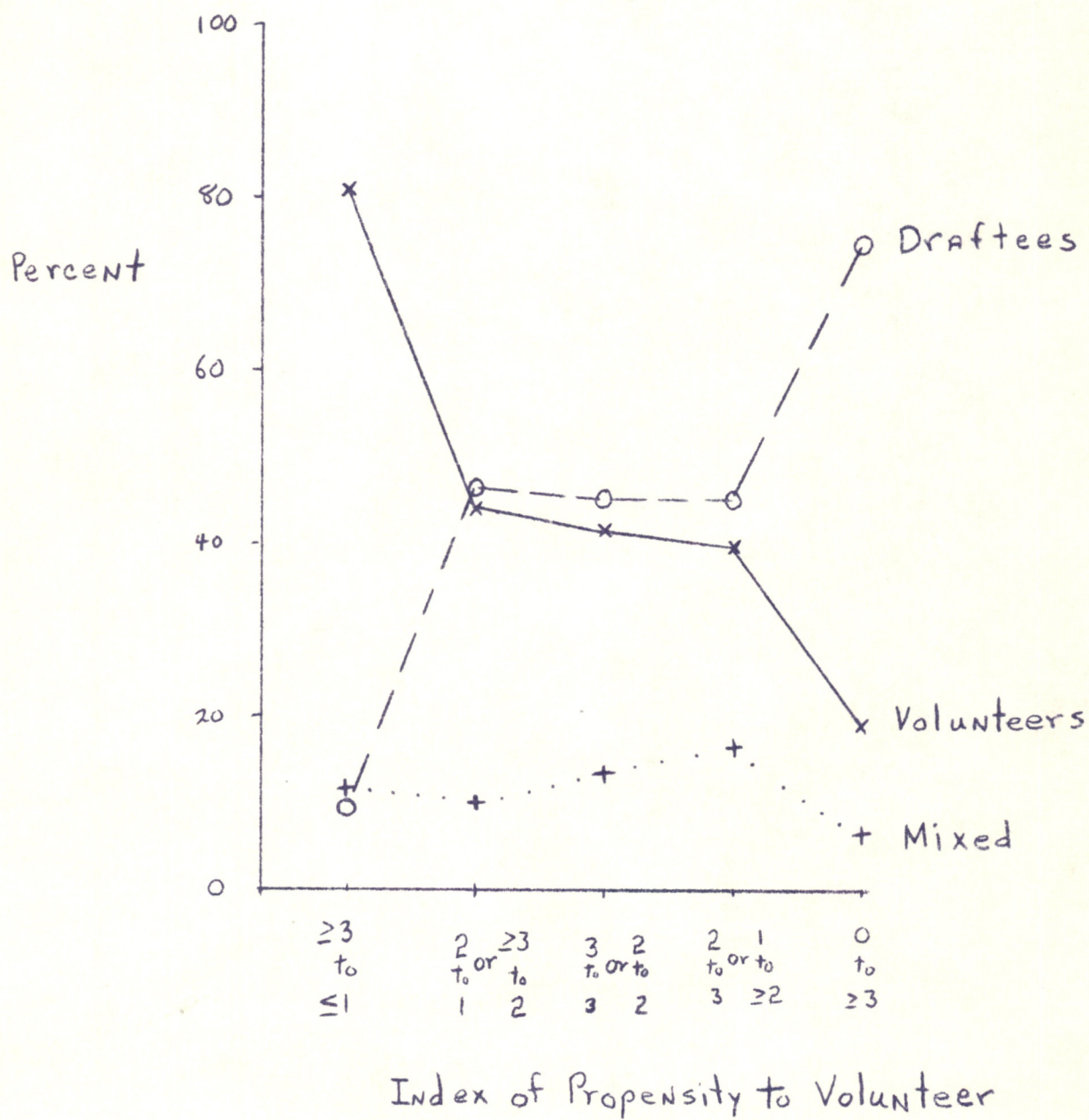


Figure 2

A REREADING OF SELECTED INTERVIEWS

The coded material used in the above statistical analysis was generated as a part of a general coding of the interview materials. It is not exhaustive of interview data nor does it involve an iterative attempt to incorporate knowledge gained from the analysis. The general coding of the total sample is a time consuming process; in an effort to extract some further information from these interview materials, without recoding the entire sample with an improved code, the author reread a sample of volunteers and of draftees to determine:

- 1) if the above relationships were borne out;
- 2) if any other differences between volunteers and draftees were apparent; and
- 3) what were the primary reasons or factors which the volunteers said influenced the decision to join.

Random samples of 55 volunteers and 45 draftees were chosen from the total population of interviews. The volunteers were chosen first and the draftee sample was roughly age matched to that of the volunteers.

None of the previously discussed relationships were contradicted; however, several new factors were suggested from items which were not coded.

Broken Families

There was a definite tendency for those subjects from homes in which one or parent was dead to volunteer (Table 2).

Table 2

	<u>% Volunteers</u>	<u>Sample Size</u>
Both Alive	46	48
Father Dead	65	40
Mother Dead	68	22
Both Parents Dead	75	16

Land

Relatively few of these subjects, perhaps contrary to the expectation of many, give the promise of land as a major reason for joining the VC. Only two of these 55 volunteers indicate it as a primary factor. The GVN has had a sporadic land distribution program. It is interesting to note that the five subjects in this sample who had received land from the GVN were all draftees.

VC Oppression

The GVN does not have a monopoly on dysfunctional activities. Three of the draftees had relatives killed by the VC or Viet Minh and two had had property confiscated. These factors which were not coded appear to add

something to the knowledge about individual conditions creating a tendency to volunteer or not. The final task was to attempt to define for this sample of volunteers the distribution of primary causes of joining. Thus, it was hoped to obtain some feel for the "importance" of these factors in creating recruits for the Viet Cong.

Distribution of Primary Reasons for Volunteering

Fifty-three of the 55 volunteers gave a clear enough story so that the author felt he could determine the primary factor or factors in the decision to volunteer for the VC. Seven of these subjects gave two reasons which appeared to be equally strong. The following percentages, however, are based on the percent of subjects (a base of 53 not 60).

How do "reasons" correlate with predictors?

Economic-Social Frustration -- The largest cluster of responses centered about what I have chosen to call economic-social frustration. Thirty-two percent expressed this as a factor. The range of responses ran from the dire straits of immediate unemployment and hunger to failing a transition exam in the school system.

The most common complaint was a poor future in the GVN system and the promise of advancement in the VC system. This theme was mentioned by 48 percent of those expressing

economic-social frustration or by 15 percent of the 53. Next in frequency was unemployment, unable to support his family, etc. with this group accounting for 29 percent of those in the economic-social frustration category or 9 percent of the total.

Personal Oppression by GVN -- Twenty-eight percent of this sample of volunteers attributed their decision to direct personal (including immediate family) oppression by representatives of the GVN. The most common theme discussed was that of being accused of being a VC or of having at one time worked for the Viet Minh or Viet Cong. Twenty-five percent of this group or 13 percent of all volunteers mentioned such accusations as of dominant importance. The accusations ranged from apparently careless acts of soldiers, such as the ARVN lieutenant who in public slapped one subject (a boy of 16 at the time) and accused him of distributing leaflets, to arrests for periods up to two years in another. At least according to the stories given by these interviewees these accusations were ungrounded although the act did become self-fulfilling.

The accusation as VC theme appeared to be the consequence of a systematic GVN effort to ferret out insurgents. Most of the remaining acts classified as personal

oppression appeared to be based in the individual personalities of soldiers and officials who misused unchecked power. Stealing, rape, and extortion account for most of the incidents.

Social Justice -- Two sets of reasons appear to be associated with a concern for social justice. Several subjects mentioned inequalities in wealth or the fact that some families were starving in the midst of relative plenty as major reasons for joining the VC. Several others mentioned the brutality, arrogance or corruption of government soldiers and officials as important. This latter type did not discuss any personal oppression but rather expressed a general hatred for the GVN for oppressing the people. In all, 11 percent of the volunteers gave reasons of this type.

VC Recruitment -- The prime reasons for joining for a number of subjects appeared to be most aptly categorized as adroit VC recruitment. These fell into two general types: 1) the very young who were enticed by the promise of excitement or adventure or who were swayed by the young girls who cajoled and shamed them into joining, and 2) the naive, (often young) unaware who were apparently deliberately compromised to such an extent that

they felt the GVN might look on them as VC and thus joined as an only out.

This latter category, along with that of personal oppression, typify some of the counterproductive aspects of the use of repression when it is not used with great selectivity. Overall this "VC recruitment group" accounted for 20 percent of the volunteers.

Family-Peer Pressure -- Another 6 percent attributed their decisions to the pressures of friends or families.

There were a few other specific reasons which do not appear to be general enough to bear discussing. It seems that the important thing is the seeming universality of some of the reasons. Real and 'imagined brutality by government representatives and personal economic-social frustration account for 60 percent of this sample of volunteers. These are the themes of dissidents seemingly the world over.

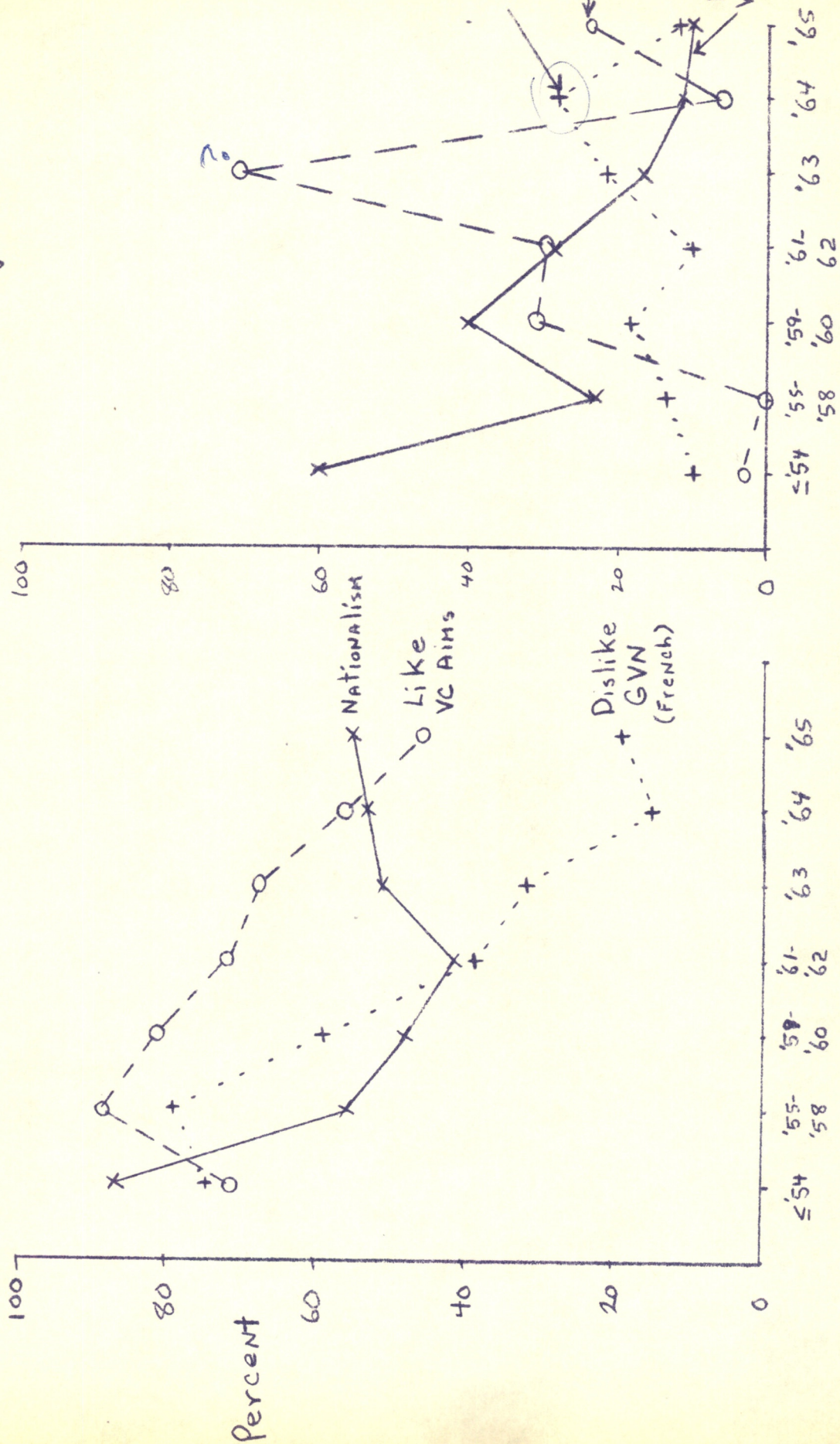
Time Trends

The character of the war in Vietnam has changed radically with time. The programs and image of the VC have been modified as war has intensified. The time variation in reasons for joining for the entire sample of volunteers and mixed joiners is given in Figure 3.

It is seen that the VC image has changed at least if these statistics reflect that image. Dislike of the GVN and like of the VC social political aims have been replaced by nationalism in 1965 as the dominant reason for volunteering. It is interesting to note that this was also true when the French were present and is probably a reaction to increasing U.S. presence in 1965. The other factors such as joining for land, VC win and to avoid service in the RVN are less important; but, also generally tend to show a decline for the most recent data.*

* Multiple reasons are permitted in this code and no effort is made to weight reasons as most important as was done in the previous section.

Reasons For Join Among Volunteers



Date Join VC

Figure 3

Reference

Denton, Frank, Two Analytical Aids For Use with the RAND Interviews, The RAND Corporation, RM-5338-ISA/ARPA, May 1967.